1935 - 1936 Ford

Model 51 V-8 Trucks

David Gunnarson

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This book also would not have been possible without the dedication and resourcefulness of the staff at the Benson Ford Research Center (BFRC) at The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan. Up until it closed in 2020, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the staff provided direction on how to conduct research, and they made innumerable trips into the stacks to retrieve materials for review. Unfortunately, because the Research Center has been closed for the past two years as this book was being completed, many questions which might be resolved by research remain unanswered.

My thanks also go out to John Caldwell, Shannon Olson, and Rick Claybaugh, who, along with David Rehor and Don Rogers, formed a committee to help guide the approval of this book by the Early Ford V-8 Club of America and ensured its publication. David Rehor allowed me to conduct invaluable research in his personal collection and also reviewed and edited this book. Lin Stacey kindly provided assistance with the Ford truck tool section to make sure the information was complete and accurate. Thanks to Dave Slater and Colin Spong for their help untangling truck production processes for Canada, Australia, and England. Special thanks to Hank Dubois for his detailed editing expertise and knowledge of 1935 Fords and to his wife Cindy who also lent her keen editing skills to the final review.

I also want to thank my wife, Sarah, who helped with editing, the design of the front cover, and selection of images in the book. I am blessed she has amazing patience, allowing me the time and space to work long hours and travel far distances to gather materials for this book. My older son, Jacob, guided me through new software programs, which resulted in many of the illustrations contained in this book. In addition to editing, he also helped select the typeface and gave helpful advice regarding page layout. My younger son, Peter, contributed his photographic skills and creativity to help make the many high-quality images in this book possible.

I also wish to acknowledge the following people for either generously supplying images or allowing me to photograph their trucks: Joe Abbin, Danny Driskell, Michael Driskell, Paul McLaughlin, Bruce Nelson, Don Rogers, and Chuck Toye.

1935 Ford Factory Service Truck

About the Author

Born in New Haven, Connecticut and raised in Concord, Massachusetts, Dave showed an early interest in restoring old vehicles. When he was just 15, he bought his first car, a 1957 Volkswagen, before he had a license to drive, and tinkered with it all during his high school years. He continued buying and repairing many other cars when pursuing a chemical and environmental engineering degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

While working for Lockheed Martin as a Licensed Professional Engineer and raising two sons, Dave began restoring a 1935 157" wheelbase stake Ford truck and was able to amass a large reference collection of original Model 51 Ford Truck literature. He has also sought out examples of original Ford optional equipment and unusual Model 51 parts. In addition to his restoration project, he is preserving an original 1936 Model 51 panel truck.

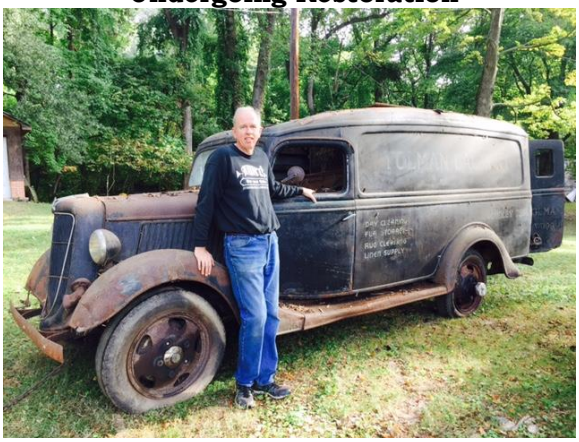
In 1999, he joined the Early V8 Ford Club of America, Northern Regional Group of the Northern Regional Group and has held various board positions including President. His current position is Programs Coordinator.

After retiring from Lockheed Martin in 2019, Dave has been able to devote more time to restoring his truck, and it became clear that writing a book about the Model 51 Truck would be useful to both himself and others. Dave had access to the archival collection at the Benson Ford Research Center before COVID but had to get sources in other ways since it closed.

He continues to enjoy an annual pilgrimage to the AACA Fall Meet in Hershey, PA each fall and has served as a judge for trucks in numerous truck and car shows.

Dave currently lives in Fairfax Station, Virginia, with his wife, Sarah, and their two dogs.

1935 157" Wheelbase Stake Truck Undergoing Restoration



1936 Panel Truck Preservation Rescue

Foreword

David G. Rehor
Author, The 1932 Ford Book, A Production Chronicle and Restoration Guide

Dave and I share a lot in common beyond our first names when it comes to old Ford vehicle history books such as this one that he has created. We've had hands-on with the subject vehicles of our choice, taking them apart and putting them back together again, doing so with an overriding desire to know that we were doing it the same way with the same parts that Ford did back in the day. That entails a serious amount of time being spent doing the requisite research into Ford's records, both in and out of the public domain.[1/] Combined with the field work of looking at surviving examples, taking photographs, and committing the findings to paper, the overall effort far exceeds the time required to restore a couple of the subject trucks.

While at my age I may never own a '35 or '36 "big" truck, I've been near the head of the line waiting for Dave's book to be printed so that I could buy my own copy. It isn't a glorified shop manual and you'd be disappointed if you are expecting a step-by-step-how-to-trouble-shoot-a-faulty-ignition-problem publication. What it is is a thorough treatise on "how it was when new". I'll be owning and reading it because knowledge not shared is knowledge lost and I'm eager to learn what Dave is sharing with us, even if it only helps round out my knowledge of the Ford vehicles of the period.

[1/] Dave's challenge was all the greater by the ongoing closure of the Benson Ford Research Center as a result of the pandemic.

Don Rogers
Author, The 1935-36 Ford Book for Domestic Passenger Cars

Dave and I met over 15 years ago when he contacted me to see what information and literature I could provide him on the 1935 and 1936 Model 51 Trucks. I have to admit that I hadn't paid much attention to the larger Model 51 truck when I was writing my 1935-36 Ford book on domestic passenger cars. Fortunately I had collected quite a lot of information on the trucks and was happy to share that with him.

From that time forward we had a back and forth exchange of information. I was restoring a 1935 Panel Delivery at the time and some of my research was useful to Dave.

Dave had an insatiable appetite for gathering as much information as he could about these large trucks. His literature collection swelled and he spent days at the Benson Ford Research Center gathering additional details. His research was thorough and his information detailed and accurate.

Rather than keeping this information to himself, he began writing a book to share this information. The 1935-36 Ford Model 51 Truck book is the result of more than 5 years of effort.

I believe that this book will be one of the best offerings on this subject and a must have for anyone restoring or just interested in the 1935-36 Model 51 Truck.

Preface

Research cited in this book began long before I considered writing it. When I began restoring my truck 20 years ago, information on how Henry Ford originally constructed Model 51 Trucks was not readily available. My ultimate goal is returning my truck to as close as possible to the way it looked when it rolled off the Ford production line.

At first, I collected information only related to understanding how to restore my 1935 157" wheelbase stake truck. With growing awareness and interest to find out as much as possible, I began to collect information on all aspects of Model 51 Trucks. After some time, I realized that I had collected a significant amount of material and felt it would be a good idea to organize and share the information and knowledge I had acquired. This book is the product of that effort and is a repository of all I have been able to document about Model 51 Trucks.

The information in this book comes from a variety of sources, including research I conducted at the Benson Ford Research Center (BFRC) at The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan and personal contacts with owners of 1935 and 1936 Ford vehicles. I also used information from second hand sources, such as existing books on the subject, sales literature, and Ford publications. I questioned and compared everything against as much primary source material as I could find. The primary sources include:

- BFRC Archive Engineering Drawings and Releases, Photos, and Assembly Change Letters.
- Original Branch Sales and Service Letters.
- Original Parts Books, Service Bulletins, and Merchandising Bulletins.
- Dealer Showroom Albums and Brochures.

Each additional fact I discovered often shed more light on a subject but occasionally led to more questions than answers. In several cases, one Ford primary source contradicted the other, especially with regard to dates of change or implementation. I often used physical evidence to resolve difference in Ford documents; however, despite my best efforts, many questions remain unanswered.

Writing this book has been a very humbling experience. The more I researched, the more I realized how little I actually knew and understood. Very gradually, I built up knowledge based on facts and documented information. It has been a journey of discovery and, as new information comes to light, so does the realization that the learning process never really ends.

Unless specifically noted, all references and information in this book apply to both the 1935 and 1936 Model 51 Trucks as domestically produced. A limited amount of information on Ford trucks produced in other countries is included in Appendix H. Where known, differences between the 1935 and 1936 models are shown as well as changes made during either model's production years.

This book represents the best, confirmed, and documented information available at the time of its publication, and I plan to provide an addendum if more information becomes available.

Dave Gunnarson

Introduction

The focus of this book is to provide as much detailed information as possible for Ford Model 51 Trucks produced in 1935 and 1936. It is not a "how-to" book, but rather "how it should be" guide as to how these trucks were originally manufactured. This book does not describe the various restoration processes and procedures, construction techniques, restoration costs, or how to win "Best of Show." It is, however, a collection of valuable data providing information on the original design and construction of all models of both 1935 and 1936 Ford Model 51 Truck and compares the differences and similarities of both years. It provides interesting facts on body styles, mechanical configurations, and color combinations as originally produced by the Ford Motor Company.

This book begins with an overview of Ford's early truck manufacturing efforts and continues with descriptions of the exterior, interior, chassis, engine, optional equipment, and body styles. I provide additional detailed information in the appendices.

The scope of this book is limited to information on the trucks assembled by Ford in their completed, Ford-delivered configuration, as well as incomplete trucks manufactured by Ford for subsequent completion by their owners. I included a sampling of supplier and vendor offerings of custom bodies and equipment available in 1935 and 1936 to create a completed truck ready for service.

Because the body used by Ford to make the panel truck was manufactured and supplied to Ford by an outside manufacturer, I provided only a limited amount of information about the detailed body parts and construction. Likewise, there is almost no information included in this book regarding the construction details of the two types of dump truck bodies and the Ford Dealer Service Truck bodies all of which were manufactured by others.

Ford part numbers are provided whenever possible and, admittedly sometimes at the expense of brevity in the text. Including part numbers provides unique identification of specific parts and is an aid for identifying correct parts. Ford employed unique numbers for individual parts so they could be used to conclusively identify a part and be helpful for finding additional information.

When a left hand and right hand version of a part exist, the part number designation in this book always provides the full part number for the right hand version followed by a "/" and only the last number (or two if needed) of the left hand version. For example, the front fender part numbers, 51-16005 (right hand) and 51-16006 (left hand) are abbreviated and shown as 51-16005/6.

I designate hardware finish by the associated hardware part number suffix description (see Appendix F). For example, a bolt with a part number ending in "-S" indicates a plain finish and a "-S7" indicates a cadmium plated finish.

I provide parts illustrations from period Ford publications, where available, to aid in describing how parts fit together and relate. These illustrations have been modified to replace generic part numbers with Model 51-specific part numbers. I created additional illustrations to provide clearer understanding of certain parts and assembly configurations. I've also created and included numerous photos to supplement the written descriptions. Alt-

hough I have done my best efforts to ensure that all images contained in this book are in the public domain, it is possible that attribution for some material has been lost. If credit for an image is appropriate, but not identified in this printing, it will be acknowledged in a future description of corrections which will be made available upon request.

In general, this book uses Ford Motor Company terminology. For example, views are described as Front, Side, and Back. The left-hand side of the vehicle is on the left and the right-hand side is on the right when the observer is behind the vehicle looking forward. Although Ford made both left-hand drive (LHD) and right hand drive (RHD) vehicles, the scope of this book is on LHD vehicles made for the domestic United States market. The orientation terminology used in this book is the same for LHD and RHD vehicles.

I have spent a great deal of time and effort to make this book as complete and accurate as possible. Identification of errors, omissions, and newly discovered information is appreciated. Comments and questions can be sent to me through the Early Ford V-8 Club at the address listed in the beginning of this book.

NOTICE TO USERS

A great deal of intensive labor has gone into the preparation of this book. Every effort has been made to assure its accuracy, but I recognize there may be differences of opinion on some points, and that new information, research, and documentation may cause some of the material contained herein to change. Users of this book who may have such information and documentation on a point of variation are urged to provide this material to the National Club (at our national address). If a substantial amount of information surfaces, an addendum may be published. Please remember that the final authority for what is or is not accurate or acceptable (so far as concourse judging is concerned) is the Judging Standards Committee, which may, from time to time, make changes in the standards for judging 1935-1936 Ford Trucks.

A NOTE ABOUT PHOTOS

Publicly available original factory photographs, drawings, and figures have been used wherever possible to illustrate a feature or to highlight a topic. Occasionally, however, it was necessary to use photographs of present day restored or original vehicles. Please be advised that these photographs were used to illustrate a specific point and that all non-direct matters in the photograph (background items, etc.) may not be correct or authentic.

Other available EFV8 Club Books:

1932 Ford Book
1933-1934 Ford Book
(Currently out of print)
1935-1936 Ford Book
1937 Ford Book
1938-1939 Ford Book
1940 Ford Book
1941-1948 Ford Book
1949-1951 Ford Book
1952-1953 Ford Book
The Flathead Ford V-8 Engine Album

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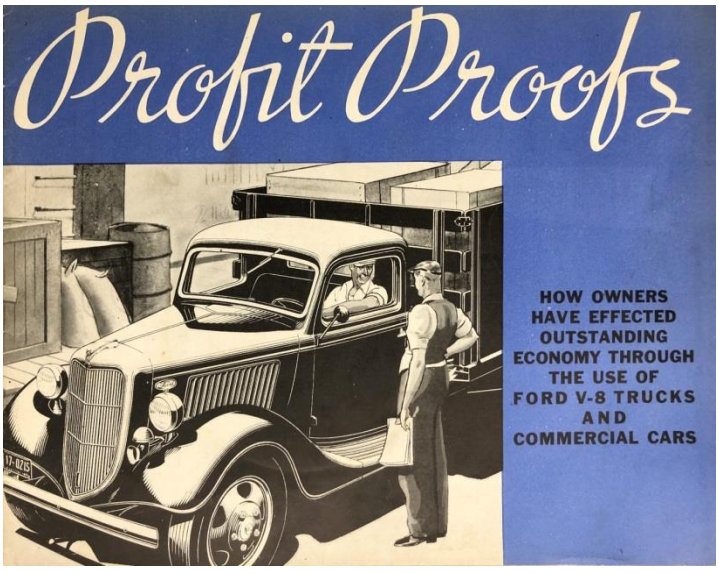
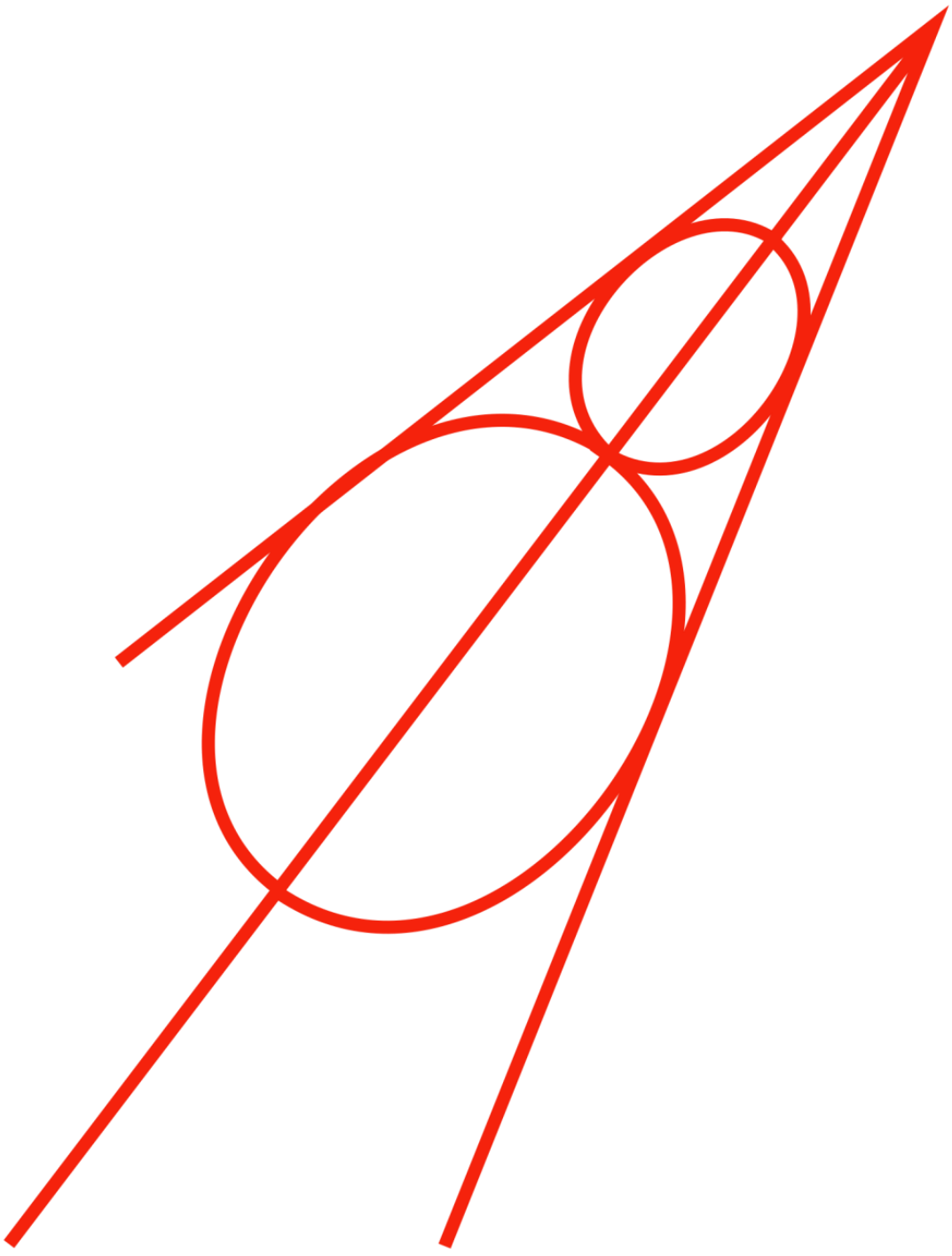
The Cover of a 24 Page 11″ x 8 ½″ June 1936 Ford Promotional Brochure for 1936 Trucks